GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:645
ANSWERED ON:02.12.2015
Indian Fishermen in Foreign Jails
Arunmozhithevan Shri A.;Chavda Shri Vinod;Chinnaraj Shri Gopalakrishnan;Choudhary Col. (Retd) Sona Ram;Girri Shri Maheish;Lakhanpal Shri Raghav;Mani Shri Jose K.;Nagar Shri Rodmal;Paraste Shri Dalpat Singh;Patel Smt. Jayshreeben ;Ram Shri Vishnu Dayal;Ramachandran Shri Krishnan Narayanasamy;Rathod Shri Dipsinh Shankarsinh;Senguttuvan Shri Balasubramaniam;Vellaigounder Shri Elumalai;Venkatesh Babu Shri T.G.

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of Indians including fishermen lodged in foreign jails at present, country-wise, particularly in Pakistan and other neighbouring countries;

(b) whether attacks on Indian fishermen by Pakistan and Sri Lankan Navy is on the rise and if so, the details along with the number of fishermen and boats seized by these countries during the last one year;

(c) the total number of Indians and boats released by Pakistan and Sri Lanka during the last one year; and

(d) the steps taken to get all the prisoners including fishermen, soldiers, civilians, etc. and their boats released from these countries along with the intervention of International fora, if any, availed for the purpose?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) As per information available with this Ministry, there are 240 prisoners in Pakistani jails who are believed to be Indians, out of which 192 are fishermen. In addition, 74 missing Indian defence personnel are also believed to be in Pakistan, but this has not been acknowledged so far by Pakistan. 61 Indian prisoners are in Sri Lankan jails, out of which 33 are fishermen.

A detailed country-wise list showing the total number of Indian prisoners, including fishermen, in jails in foreign countries, is placed at Annexure.

(b) & (c) According to information available with this Ministry, 313 fishermen, believed to be Indian fishermen, were apprehended by Pakistan over the past one year. Out of these, 276 Indian fishermen have been released by Pakistan.

In Sri Lanka, in the past one year, 400 Indian fishermen were arrested. Due to the Government's steadfast efforts, 367 of these fishermen have been released and repatriated. In the same period, a total of 64 boats were detained, out of which 8 have already been released and 56 still remain in the custody of the Sri Lankan authorities.

(d) After confirmation of the Indian nationality of the person, our Missions make all possible efforts with the foreign Governments to provide necessary assistance to Indians imprisoned in jails, which include requesting local authorities for speedy trials, seeking remission of sentences, providing advice and guidance in legal and other matters, ensuring fair and humane treatment in foreign jails and repatriation to India of those who are released. In some countries, our Missions also request the local Government to grant amnesty to the arrested or convicted Indians. As per information available from the Ministry of Home Affairs, we have operational agreements with 35 countries for transfer of sentenced persons.

The Government attaches the highest priority to the safety, security and welfare of Indian fishermen. Our Missions and Posts regularly seek consular access to Indian fishermen detained in foreign countries, ensure their welfare and also pursue their early release and repatriation, along with their boats. Given the humanitarian and livelihood dimensions of this issue, the Government has put in place several bilateral mechanisms to ensure cooperation and understanding between India and the countries concerned, to promote the safety and security of Indian fishermen.

In case of Pakistan, we have a bilateral Agreement on Consular Access, signed in May 2008. The India-Pakistan Joint Judicial Committee, consisting of retired judges from both countries, visit jails in both countries, to review the situation of prisoners, including fishermen, on both sides.

In the case of Sri Lanka, our Mission works closely with the Sri Lankan Ministry of Defence, the Attorney General's Office and the law enforcement agencies concerned, to secure the release and repatriation of our fishermen. There is a Joint Working Group on Fisheries and a Joint Committee on Fisheries, which take up fishermen's issues for resolution on basis of the bilateral Understanding on Practical Arrangements of October 2008. In addition, talks are held from time to time between Fishermen's Associations in India and Sri Lanka.

Annexure

List of Indian Prisoners (including fishermen)

Sl. No.	Names of Country	Total number of Indians including fishermen lodged in foreign jails	Number of Indian fishermen in foreign jails
1	Australia	51	Nil
2	Armenia	2	Nil
3	Azerbaijan	1	Nil
4	Bahrain	114	Nil
5	Bangladesh	310	178
6	Belgium & Luxembourg*	21	Nil
7	Bhutan	44	Nil
8	Brunei	2	Nil
9	Cambodia	2	Nil
10	Canada	69	Nil
11	China	19	Nil
12	Colombia & Equador*	5	Nil
13	Cuba	1	Nil
14	Cyprus	5	Nil
15	Denmark	21	Nil
16	Egypt	8	Nil
17	Fiji	2	Nil
18	France	46	Nil
19	Germany	1	Nil
20	Ghana, Burkino Faso*, Sierra Leone* & Togo*	7	Nil
21	Greece	40	Nil
22	Indonesia, Timor Leste/East Timor*	23	Nil
23	Iran	24	Nil
24	Iraq	9	Nil
25	Ireland	1	Nil
26	Italy	145	Nil
27	Japan	7	Nil
28	Jordan	2	Nil
29	Kenya, Eritrea* & Somalia*	6	Nil
30	Korea (Republic of)	1	Nil
31	Kuwait	334	Nil
32	Kyrgyzstan	1	Nil
33	Lebanon	8	Nil
34	Madagascar	2	Nil
35	Maldives	9	N.A.
36	Malaysia	308	Nil
37	Mauritius	11	Nil
38	Mexico	1	Nil
39	Morocco	1	Nil
40	Myanmar	63	N.A.
41	Nepal	996	Nil
42	New Zealand, Samoa* & Niue*	8	Nil
43	Nigeria, Benin*, Chad* & Cameroon*	14	Nil
44	Norwary	1	Nil
45	Oman	99	Nil
46	Panama, Nicaragua*, Costa Rica*	2	Nil
47	Pakistan	314	192
48	Philippines, Palau* & Marshall Islands*	6	Nil
49	Poland & Lithuania*	2	Nil
50	Portugal	4	Nil
51	Qatar	105	Nil
52	Romania, Albania* & Moldova*	1	Nil
53	Russian Federation	5	Nil
54	Saudi Arabia	1386	Nil
55	Senegal, Fuinea Bissau*, The Gambia* & Cabo Verde*	1	Nil
56	South Africa	14	Nil
57	Seychelles	35	Nil
58	Singapore	110	Nil
59	Slovak Republic	1	Nil
60	Spain	45	Nil
61	Sri Lanka	61	33
62	Suriname, Barbados*, St. Lucia*, St. Vincent & The Grenadines*	3	Nil

63 Switzerland 6 Nil
64 Syria 1 Nil
65 Tanzania 1 Nil
66 Thailand 65 Nil
67 United Arab Emirates 1069 Nil
68 United Kingdom 485 Nil
69 United States of America 178 Nil
70 Yemen 3 Nil
71 Zambia 1 Nil

Total 6749

* Concurrently accredited countries
N.A. denotes figures not available on number of fishermen in foreign jails